



Monday, November 14, 2005

Mr. Bernard Patry, M.P., B.A., M.D.
Chair
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Chairperson,

As Canada's largest and most senior arts advocacy organization, the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) takes great interest in all public policy developments that have an impact on Canada's artists, creators, arts organizations, arts producers, and the cultural industries.

We have followed closely the progress of Canada's new International Policy Statement, "A Role of Pride and Influence in the World". This document represents a major redefinition of Canada's role in the world arena and marks a significant departure from some of the key aspects of our previous foreign policy. In that document, the promotion of Canadian culture and values was the so-called "Third Pillar" of Canadian foreign policy.

The CCA has noted the disappearance of this important dimension of our international policy with great dismay. While it is true that there are fleeting references in the text to the contribution that artists and academics can make in the realm of public diplomacy, regrettably, the apparently no longer constitutes one of the main "pillars" of Canada's international policy.

In reviewing the survey prepared by the Standing Committee, the CCA was surprised that there were no questions regarding the appropriate role for artists and creators in the fulfillment of Canada's international policy objectives. Given the major shift in the focus of this international policy from our previous one, it would seem appropriate to gauge any reaction to this diminished place for artists and creators in public diplomacy and the promotion of Canadian culture and values on the world stage.

It would be the hope of the CCA and its members that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade explore this major departure from Canada's previous foreign policy during the course of your consultation process. I can assure you that the CCA and its members will have many suggestions to restore a greater focus on the promotion of Canadian culture and values in the international arena.

Yours respectfully,


Robert Spickler
President


Alain Pineau
National Director